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POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION.

A striking feature of the times is the sustained and concentrated effort that is being made to apply the principles of political science to the solution of problems of government presented by the working of American institutions. While in England the tendency of scientific thought is toward consideration of the objects of government and the proper exercise of its authority, in this country the tendency is toward consideration of the constitution of government itself. The work is being carried on with the thoroughness for which American scholarship is justly noted and with the attention to inductive methods which is the general trait of scientific study. This is particularly noticeable in the practical study of problems of municipal government for which the National Municipal League was organized. As one result of its labors we have a report which under the title of "A Municipal Program" makes an instructive analysis of the causes of municipal maladministration, and outlines methods of correction embodying the results of wide study. The positions taken are not beyond dispute and the princi-

ple of municipal organization recommended is energetically controverted in the work on municipal government which was the last product of Mr. Dorman B. Eaton's lifelong endeavor to promote the public welfare. The issue of "A Municipal Program," however, marks an important stage in the progress of a movement full of promise in public usefulness.

Among those who took an active part in the preparation of "A Municipal Program" is Professor Frank J. Goodnow, whose recent work on "Politics and Administration"<sup>1</sup> may be said to give the philosophical principles on which the program is based. Although the work deals with government in general, the problems which it discusses are chiefly those presented in local administration in this country, and the elucidation which it makes of the relations between local, state and national government, aims to throw light upon those causes of local maladministration which are the great reproach of our constitutional system. The work has been carefully and thoroughly done and it largely increases the debt which political science owes to Professor Goodnow's labors. Its philosophical treatment of the subject affords a basis for a consideration of the fundamental nature of the problems discussed.

In seeking the basis of the treatise we find it in a conception of the state as an entity possessing a self-conscious personality. It follows that political science deals with the expression of that personality as regards the character of the organs of expression and the mode of their action, and it is from this point of view that Professor Goodnow discusses politics and administration. But there is another point of view: the one upon which Seeley insists so earnestly in his "Introduction to Political Science," and which is systematically set forth by Spencer in Chapter XXIII of Part IV of the "Principles of Ethics." From this point of view

<sup>1</sup> *Politics and Administration*. By Frank J. Goodnow, A. M., LL. D. Pp. vi. 270. Price \$1.50. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900.

the state may vary greatly in form, characteristics and habits, and the true province of political science is to classify the various forms and distinguish their characteristics. According to this view the archetype of the state is to be sought in such social aggregates as Messrs. Spencer and Gillen have described in their splendid anthropological treatise on the "Native Races of Central Australia." There society is seen in its rudimentary form—the food-seeking group,—within which the family originates; and there may be found specimens of the germs from which under various conditions have been developed the different types of family and political organization, and all the various forms of the state. Looked at from this point of view, the state from whose nature Professor Goodnow deduces certain governmental principles is simply one species of the state, differing from the primitive form as greatly as a vertebrate animal differs from a protozoon. Indeed, it is a species which has been formed upon the monarchical principle upon lines that strikingly suggest the development of the vertebrate type of animal organism. It is perhaps the only form of the state which develops self-consciousness and the power of giving rational determination to its conduct.

When we examine the constitutions of American government we do not find one form of the state but various forms. In its general organization the national government belongs to the species of the state which I have ventured to refer to as the vertebrate type, and Professor Goodnow's remarks on the general similarity of real political institutions hold good of states of this class, but in state and municipal government we have different species of the state, with different natures and habits. The characteristics of a state government, with its distribution of administrative functions and legislative powers among independent and separately constituted authorities, are well known to be different from those of the national government, with its integration of administrative authority; and in the various forms of municipal govern-

ment still other sets of characteristics appear. The national government has in every large community officials whose duties correspond to similar state and local officials and yet their political status is altogether different. In Mr. John Jay Chapman's work on "Causes and Consequences," he illustrates the evils in politics of what he calls "commercialism" by describing how a defaulting town treasurer is screened from prosecution by political conditions induced by the instinct of self-preservation in the management of a railroad corporation; but if the internal revenue collector, or the United States sub-treasurer, be substituted, the whole argument falls to pieces at once. Everybody knows that with everything else just as Mr. Chapman has described it, the defaulting official would be detected early in his career and prosecution would follow in due course. A state or town treasurer is safe during his term of office and comes to grief in the end only if he fails to make good when he transfers the office. A treasurer under the national government, even although in an outlying dependency, under a newly introduced system, is detected and arrested when he may have imagined that he had safely concealed his speculations. Thus we see that different species of the state are sharply distinguished in their characteristics even when closely intermingled in location.

A marked characteristic of low forms of the state is their fissiparous nature. Unless external pressure counteracts, they extend by simple fission, clans going off to other districts, developing into tribes by growth and forming new clans by partition. This characteristic became atrophied in those forms of the state which first tied man to the soil, developed primeval empire and laid the primary strata of civilization. Their organization presents such rigidity of structure and such a feebly developed nervous system as to suggest an analogy to the crustacean type of animal organism. But in all forms of the state whose development has been accomplished without extinguishing the volitional

nature of their component groups the primitive characteristic persists in new phases. Its operation is plainly discernible in the constitutional history of Greece and Rome, in which it takes the shape of migration of colonies and also in the development of political structure corresponding to divisions in the community. Roman history affords evidence of the fundamental nature of the tendency in the fact that sometimes actual fission would precede the growth of divisive political structure. A well-known instance is the creation of the office of tribune which was brought about by an exodus of the plebeians and was a concession by which they were induced to return to the community. It was because political growth in Greece never lost this fissiparous nature that Greek constitutional development tended to social disintegration and failed utterly to produce a political system able to comprehend large communities. Rome escaped like futility only by the practical instinct, probably engendered by "commercialism," which led her to preserve the imperium through all her political experimentation, and this finally developed into the principate of Cæsar and Augustus, extending through the mass of society a vertebrate principle which gave the state fixity of type and confined political growth to functional development. As compared with later forms of the state the type is stamped with inferiority from its lack of organs of inhibition qualifying the volitional activity of the state by an efficient representation of particular interests, but it was a great advance upon antecedent forms of the state and it was an intermediate form in the evolution of higher forms of the state.

When we scrutinize our own constitutional history we can trace the operation of the divisive tendency within the limits imposed by "commercialism." The constitution of the United States was an achievement of commercialism, and in its formative stages it was carefully disguised as a movement to secure better commercial regulations. The constitution re-established the same general type of government

which had presided over the historical development of the national character, but a repulsion of classes soon took place, which gradually found expression in modifications of political structure. The organization of the national government was so inflexible that in it political change took the form of functional development; but in the constitutions of state and municipal government political change took the form of structural partition, as in Greece and Rome, but with variations caused by changed social conditions and a different heritage of political habit. In the national government, local offices were brought under centralized control; in state and municipal governments a multitude of offices which had been subordinate to central authority and filled by its appointment were made locally elective, with concomitant disintegration of administrative authority. As results of these divergent processes various species of the state have been evolved, which differ widely in their characteristics, although they have American politics as their common habitat.

This conclusion, to which we are led by applying to American politics Spencer's theory of the variability of the forms of the state, possesses practical importance, for it suggests that the low proclivities of our local politics are not aberrations from the type, but are simply normal characteristics of low forms of the state, made offensive because they affront an ethical sensibility developed in a higher form of the state. This explains the fact, otherwise a mystery, that as government in this country becomes more extensive in its sphere it becomes more satisfactory in its conduct. If direct popular supervision of the conduct of government had the importance which the dominant school of reformers attach to it, municipal government should be best administered, since it comes closer to the people than state or national government, and the consequences of mal-administration are more direct and immediate in their effect. By like inference, state government should be superior to

the national government in quality of administration; but, as a matter of fact, the gradation of satisfactoriness is just the other way. And if the ideal *civitas* of the reformers could be realized we should have the lowest conceivable form of the state, whose functions being the common property of the whole mass, would be coarsely and feebly discharged, and whose behavior would have no higher control than would be supplied by the promptings of appetite or the excitements of alarm. During periods of transition, when the state is suffering the pangs which attend processes of development in its organism to conform it to the conditions of its being, the imagination is apt to glorify primitive types of the state. The famous passage in Plato may be recalled in which he made such a startling assertion of the principle that "friends have all things in common," as the basis of an ideal commonwealth. A practical realization of this ideal is found among the Australian Blackfellows, but it would not attract poetic fancy. At present our own literature is being enriched by the charming essays of Mr. John Jay Chapman, in which low forms of the state are beautifully idealized, and the school of thought of which, since Mr. Godkin's retirement, he is the leading exponent, still gives such vigor to retrograde tendencies in our politics that under a disguise of reform, class interests are able to introduce new partitions of administrative authority and additional confusions of responsibility.

Professor Goodnow's work on "Politics and Administration" is the monument of a new departure in political speculation. Although ideas and assumptions derived from a special concept of the state underlie the argument, yet in analyzing the functions of the state the different forms of state organization are discriminated, and the causes of defects of local government are traced to political structure incompatible with the administrative authority essential to the distinct formulation and expression of the will of the state. The divergence between national and state government in



the development of administrative authority is clearly explained, and the progressive centralization of administrative authority in the national government is elucidated by citations of department regulations and judicial decisions. The circumstances which give to party organization a position of such commanding influence in our governmental system are acutely analyzed, and Professor Goodnow holds that but for the office of party in connecting divisive political structure "we should have anarchy instead of government"—a conclusion which may be startling to those who have been in the habit of regarding party spirit as the bane of our institutions. An admirable example of the vigor of Professor Goodnow's thought is the chapter on "The Boss," in which he shows by analysis and comparison that the development of the Boss is a stage in the process of integration which in England has extracted responsible government from representative institutions. All the portions of the work devoted to the analysis of existing political conditions are marked by a veracity of perception that will command the respect even of men of affairs accustomed to dealing with things as they are, without concern about theories. When political science brings its propositions into accord with the facts of human nature and of practical experience in life politicians will hearken to it.

But when Professor Goodnow passes on to the consideration of remedies his grip upon the actual appears to relax. Some of the suggestions made as to methods for subjecting party agency to public control embody the very fallacies exposed in the chapters on administrative authority. The multiplicity of elective offices in state and municipal government imposes upon the general body of citizenship a task of appointment which is really an administrative function, and the effort to perform it enfeebles the function of control which is all that the general body of citizenship is naturally capable of exercising. In the national government an integration of administrative authority has taken place which

admits of a corresponding integration of control, and the spontaneous activities of the people have developed an organ for the purpose in party. But party must also produce the coalescence of the executive and legislative departments which, as Professor Goodnow shows, is essential to the efficiency of administration. Hence, to a large extent, party is an organ of administration, and this circumstance impoverishes its function as an organ of control so that it is not satisfactorily discharged. Nevertheless its operation is energetic enough to make the administration of the national government conform in a general way to the requirements of public opinion. Administrative authority in state and municipal government has been so disintegrated that there is no adequate basis for the development of an efficient organ of control. Under the circumstances it is as much as party can do to provide some sort of administrative connection among the scattered powers of government, and its capabilities as an organ of control are feebly developed in this field. Professor Goodnow points out that "if we are to have much change in our party organization, our governmental organization will have to be somewhat changed." And Professor Goodnow goes on to show that party activity has changed and is changing our governmental system. Now, one process of this change which is plainly visible to those who can observe that which is familiar, is the integration of administrative authority within party itself, and this too is noted by Professor Goodnow in his chapter on "The Boss."

It seems, therefore, to be a strange *non sequitur* when later on one finds Professor Goodnow advocating a wholesale scheme of party disintegration. The very statement of the proposition involves a contradiction in terms which should suggest its fallacy. The inorganic condition which it is proposed to create by diffusing the exercise of party function through the whole mass of party membership excludes the idea of party organization. Structure and function are correlative, and the notion that administrative capacity

and corporate responsibility would somehow survive in party after the extirpation of the organic structure with which they are associated, finds no parallel except in the case of the Cheshire cat, whose grin remained after the cat had disappeared. This portion of Professor Goodnow's treatise exhibits an irrelevancy to the premises obtained by his analysis of political conditions, which indicates some error in fundamental conceptions. Perhaps this error is the tacit assumption that the forms of the state found in state and local government possess the ethical nature of the highest known form of the state—the vertebrate type to which our national government belongs, but that this ethical nature is somehow suppressed by party organization. That is a mistake. There is no such ethical nature in those low forms of the state; whatever rudimentary ethical traits are found in them were communicated by extraneous influence and are not a natural characteristic. Inquiry into the political history of our cities will show that before party rule became firmly established they were subject to gang rule, and impartial observation at the present time will show that by so much as restrictive legislation is effective in removing municipal government from regular party control it tends to pass under gang rule again. Lower than this our politics can hardly get, for the principle of personal leadership defies all schemes of pulverizing society into atoms, and the ideal of a community without differentiation of political function in the mass of its citizenship can never be realized. Nominations to office will always be made by the few no matter how many may seem to participate, and the only open questions are the extent and the location of the responsibility.

The true method of improvement is that which Professor Goodnow points out—administrative centralization, and in proportion as the general body of citizens are relieved of the duty of selecting officials for administrative position public control over the conduct of administration will increase. This relief party is extending by converting elective offices

into mere party appointments and by so much as party management increases its power of dictation in such matters, by so much it augments its responsibility and perfects its organization as an instrument of control for public use. A marked instance of this tendency was presented during the last political campaign in Pennsylvania. Some exposures were made concerning one of the candidates for state office, endangering the success of the ticket as a whole, so that he was forced to resign, and the party leaders appointed in his place a candidate whose high merits were universally admitted. If the candidates had been grouped by offices on the official ballot instead of being offered as a party ticket the party management would have been to a large extent relieved of the responsibility, pressure upon which enabled public opinion to purge the ticket. If political arrangements were such that the candidates were nominated by the direct action of the voters themselves there would be no responsibility left whatever. If the people should really make the nominations themselves whom are they to hold responsible for injudicious choice?

It hardly requires argument to prove that the presidential election is a consultation of the mass of the people as to the general policy of the government and the objects of the administration. The people are called upon to control the government, not to administer it; and they can do the one because they do not have to do the other. But in state and municipal government the people are called upon to administer the government, and their control is proportionately defective. Popular control over the national government was impossible until party had reduced the electoral colleges to merely ministerial functions and brought the political activities of the various states into subordination to centralized party authority. Popular control over state and municipal government will be impossible until in one way or another similar integration of authority is accomplished. When state and municipal elections become simply a con-

sultation of the people upon administrative policy, as in the presidential election, then the people will acquire a real control over the government there too. The great hindrance to constitutional growth in this direction is the habit of reform in the structure of government, unsettling the type and arresting functional development.

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